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# Hotel Marketing Strategies:

**How Hoteliers Can Reach Travelers  
Throughout Each Stage of  
the Traveler Journey**





No matter the location or the type of property you manage, the truth is that hotel marketing has become more complex than ever. Economic uncertainties and evolving traveler behaviors have become a constant in the world of hospitality, and to keep up with this ongoing change and keep bookings on pace throughout the year, hoteliers need to implement smart marketing strategies.

Add to that the evolving digital marketing landscape, including privacy regulation and platform updates, and reaching potential guests has never been more challenging.

It is crucial to approach hotel marketing as much more than a series of tactics. A robust, long-term strategy that considers multiple marketing initiatives will lead to the strongest results.

## 5 Stages of the Traveler Journey

Delighting a leisure guest, who has so many hotel options to choose from, is no easy task. In order to drive profitable demand to your hotel, it is important to understand who your audience is and what type of experience they are looking for. To do this effectively, a hotelier must understand the needs of their guests from the time they start considering a vacation all the way through to the moment they type their credit card information into the booking engine.

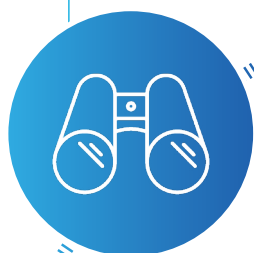
By looking at each stage of the traveler journey, you will be able to optimize your hotel's marketing strategy to accommodate the needs of your guests, and you will land more bookings.



Explore the **5 Stages of the Traveler Journey** with us!

1.

**The Inspiration Stage**



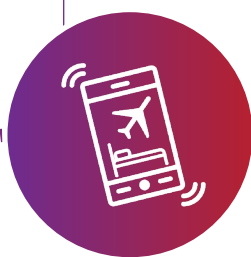
2.

**The Planning Stage**



3.

**The Booking Stage**



4.

**The On-Site Experience Stage**



5.

**The Post-Trip Stage**





# 1 The Inspiration Stage

Every trip begins with a specific need or dream. Whether it's a summer family vacation at Disney World in Orlando or a friends getaway to Munich's Oktoberfest, there's always something that motivates travelers to think about their next adventure. At this step of the traveler journey, your guests are pondering what they want to do and whom they would like to be with during the experience. The inspiration stage is a time for you to build content around emotions that your guests will likely enjoy at your hotel.

When evaluating who your potential customers are, past guests are an ideal place to start, since they already know your brand. Although your messaging should resonate with new hotel guests as well, it should aim to remind previous guests of what they enjoyed most about their past visits.

## TIPS

- **Social media:** Publish inspirational content on Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok, YouTube, and Pinterest to connect with travelers thinking about their next adventure. Be sure to use short videos or vibrant images to show what you can offer to potential guests, then optimize the posts to build trust for your brand.

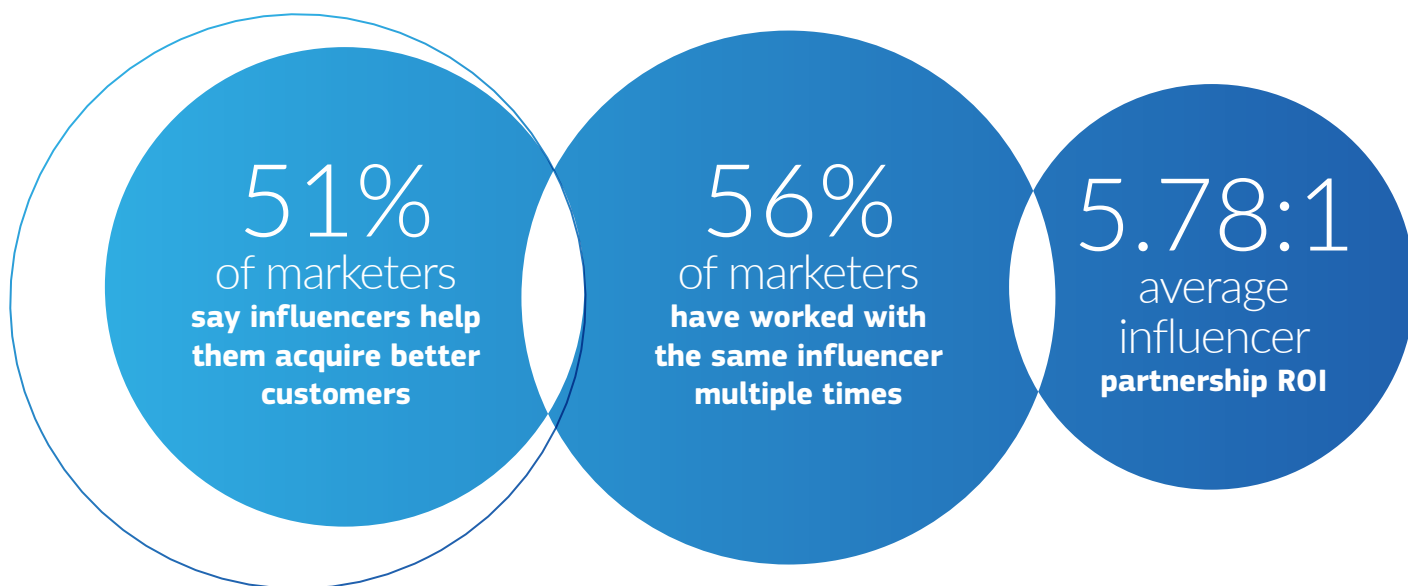
Facebook and Instagram are the most common platforms that influence travel decisions. This is largely driven by younger travelers.<sup>1</sup>

||| **PRO TIP:** Use branded hashtags to boost brand awareness.



- **Influencers:** Partner with bloggers and influencers to showcase your brand to their followers. Make sure you work with reputable influencers who cater to your ideal audience.

## Is influencer marketing worth it?



[Meltwater, 2023 Influencer Marketing Statistics](#)

- **Contextual ads:** Insert your brand on contextually relevant web pages with Google Ads. These ads appear on web pages based on the content your guests visit, so you can reach guests if they are seeking specific features such as luxury suites, beach rooms, or family stays.
- **Blogging:** Blog posts are a great way to engage your audience with educational information about a geographical area, attractions, and tips. Your guests are looking for information about upcoming events and things to do, and you can use blog posts to insert yourself into the conversation and provide that detail.  
**PRO TIP:** Keep a record of common guest questions and publish your answers in blog posts or as part of your FAQs.
- **DMOs or CVBs:** Partner with your national or local destination management organization (DMO) or convention & visitors bureau (CVB) to jointly promote your area. Spark interest in your brand among those travelers who stumble upon a destination's landing page or social media account.
- **Email campaign:** Be sure to reach out to prior visitors every few months with an email campaign to remind them how much fun they had the last time they stayed with you. This can be a great way to inspire previous guests who are already familiar with your property.





- **The mobile user experience:** Your potential visitors are likely using their cell phones to view your site as most inspiration stage research is done on these devices. <sup>2</sup> Browsing hotels and airfares has become as common as shopping for clothing on mobile. <sup>3</sup> Your site must be user-friendly if you want to capture their attention and begin to build a relationship with them.
- **Hotel review sites or metasearch sites:** Nearly 100% of consumers read online reviews when shopping online. <sup>4</sup> Create and control your property's listing cross the most popular online aggregators such as TripAdvisor, Expedia, Booking.com, Kayak and Google. These websites can connect you with qualified traffic at this early stage: future travelers who are performing an initial online search.



## 2 The Planning Stage

Every traveler wants the most bang for their buck, whether it's looking for a hotel near an event they'd like to attend, or one offering a complimentary breakfast. At this stage of the traveler journey, potential guests have built a list of experiences they are interested in, but they may not have narrowed down when or where they want to have them. This part of the



traveler process presents a great opportunity for your hotel to build connections with future guests as they shop for the best value and experiences in town.

As travelers begin to compare options, they will also begin thinking about the logistics of their trip in relation to your hotel: considering how far your property is from a certain venue, for instance, whether any fun activities exist nearby, and likely costs associated with the trip. These potential guests will start focusing on properties that are most likely to deliver the best trip and the highest return on their dollar spend.

This is a critical stage of the traveler journey, where marketing can really make a difference in terms of determining and appealing to what matters most to the guest. A strong marketing strategy at this point will not only help you build a relationship with your audience, but it also lets you control the narrative and show your hotel's true worth.



## TIPS

- **Brand.com website:** Your hotel's home page is the equivalent of a store's display window. Place your unique selling points front and center and remember to include enticing images of your property and engaging banners that lead browsers to more of your website's key content.
- **SEO:** It is important to establish a strategy that will allow your brand to dominate the first page of search results by focusing primarily on SEO, metasearch, and paid media.

Capture demand and create a trustworthy web experience by improving your website's visibility and its positioning on organic search results with SEO. Following SEO best practices will make it easier for search engines to crawl, index, and understand your content, and to display it to relevant users based on their search query.

**PRO TIP:** Download our [Hotel SEO Checklist](#) to build or evaluate your property's current SEO strategy.

- **Local SEO and your Google Business Profile:** When guests are looking for a hotel in your geographic area, you can drive more qualified traffic and bookings with an optimized [Google Business Profile](#) (GBP). Building a GBP is the first step to local search success. Make sure you include the property's name, address, phone number, photos and videos to show off the hotel's top features. <sup>5</sup>
- **Metasearch:** Potential guests can easily compare prices on hotel metasearch sites. Make sure that your hotel's listing is up to date and that your Brand.com rate is the most competitive when compared to other listings. Also, tailor your strategy so that your property is visible to future guests who are looking for hotels in your geographic area.





## What about Wikipedia entries?

If your property is historic or notable and has already generated mentions in the press or on authoritative websites, a Wikipedia entry would make good sense. Google often uses Wikipedia content to populate the Knowledge Panel section of the platform's search results. However, your Brand.com will not directly benefit from the citations and external linking. Instead, it will increase your property's referral traffic and overall online visibility.

**III PRO TIP:** Review our [Five tips on how hotel properties can excel across metasearch platforms](#)

- **Paid media:** Google Ads, Google Hotel Ads, and Google Remarketing are essential elements of a hotel's digital marketing strategy. Build ads that feature your hotel's value proposition and promote seasonal deals to convert price-sensitive travelers.

**III PRO TIP:** Based on demand and booking data from your business intelligence suite, target specific geographic locations via Google Ads to maximize ad spend.

- **Social media retargeting:** Draw shoppers back to your website and remain relevant with social media ads that reach potential customers who visited but left your site without converting.
- **Pricing and packaged offers:** More than 60% of U.S. travelers would consider an impulse trip based on a good hotel or flight deal. <sup>6</sup> Therefore, properties should feel encouraged to launch discounted offers and hotel packages that are relevant to the needs of their future guests. The best offers must be available and listed on Brand.com.

## Fuel your media strategy with 360-degree data

The most successful hotel marketers rely on accurate, real-time data to gain a 360-degree view of their properties and competitive sets from yesterday and today, and for the future. Carefully curating the right data set empowers hoteliers to establish and optimize media strategies that bolster bottom-line goals. [Learn More.](#)

**III PRO TIP:** Optimize your Offers page on Brand.com by sharing the latest discounts. This page will drive traffic, plus you can point paid ads to these pages to increase your conversion rate.

- **Blogging:** Publish at least two blog posts per month about upcoming events, travel tips, and local recommendations. This content will help you rank in Google search results and educate your future guests.

# 3 The Booking Stage

This is it! As a result of all your recent marketing efforts, a traveler at this stage is ready to book their upcoming trip.

As the path leading to this point may have been complex for travelers, it is important to make the booking process for your hotel as easy and seamless as possible. Put your future guests at ease by featuring your hotel's key differentiators and add a sense of urgency as you encourage them to click the "Book Now" button.

**III PRO TIP:** Make your website and booking engine a high-converting powerhouse with our [Personalization and Direct Bookings Playbook](#).

Keep in mind that when booking travel online, these are the most important considerations for travelers:



Bookings made exclusively online are trending upwards, with even older travelers reporting that they're becoming increasingly comfortable in booking trips online. <sup>7</sup>





## TIPS

- **Metasearch:** Make sure you've set an explicit strategy for metasearch, as this channel mostly captures bookers, not lookers. Metasearch platforms attract potential clients who are ready to book while providing a lower cost-per-acquisition rate than OTAs do.

||| **PRO TIPS:** Implement merchandising options to make your Brand.com listing more attractive, such as adding your logo or a Member Rate call-out. Diversify investments across metasearch sites while focusing on rates and price accuracy.

- **Trust-building content:** To book with confidence, shoppers need to fully understand your value-added offering. Build trust by clearly stating your property's booking and cancellation policies. Be specific when describing the services and amenities you have at hand and ensure there are no disparities with what you can actually offer at the time of their stay.
- **Streamlined booking experience:** Potential guests will abandon your booking engine if it is clunky and difficult to use as they navigate through the booking process. Your booking engine must look professional, display room images, and include clear messaging so guests know exactly what they are booking prior to checkout.

Check out our [Hotel Website Navigation Checklist](#), which includes best practices on how to establish a fast and intuitive online experience.



### • The mobile user experience:

Travelers can shift to another site if they experience friction when booking on mobile devices. Hoteliers should identify areas on mobile sites or apps that cause issues for bookers and consider possible improvements. <sup>8</sup>

- **Exit-intent pop-ups:** Install an exit-intent pop-up on your site to trigger whenever a guest signals that they want to close the window before booking. This is an effective way to grab your audience's attention before they leave your site.

||| **PRO TIP:** Add limited-time discounts or last-minute offers on the pop-ups to convince guests to book promptly.

- **Loyalty program:** Persuade customers to join your hotel's loyalty program as they finalize their booking with better rates and benefits or remind them to include their existing loyalty account number. Outline the program's membership structure and top perks or redirect them to the loyalty program's page for further details.

**PRO TIP:** Keep in mind that as web providers look to phase out cookies, [the use of first-party data](#), or data owned by your brand (such as that recorded from loyalty programs), will be crucial to meet and target desired audiences.



Learn more about loyalty programs by downloading [The Hotelier's Guide to Guest Loyalty Programs](#).

Many travelers continue to seek inspiration and research for their trip even after completing a booking.

95%

Visit travel-related sites after booking

[Google](#), [Bain Study](#)

74%

re-research a trip

**Continuously review the tips and tricks in this eBook to remain top-of-mind throughout the traveler journey.**



## 4 The On-Site Experience Stage

Once your guests arrive at your hotel, it's time for them to start enjoying their vacation and making memories that will last a lifetime!

Your hotel marketing strategy shifts at this stage from describing the value that your hotel offers to delivering a memorable experience that guests will be willing to share with others.

While not typically thought of as marketing, your staff plays a vital role in the success of your hotel's efforts. Creating unforgettable guest experiences is the role of your entire staff from the front desk attendant to your housekeeping crew, so make sure each team member understands how important they are to your guests' overall experience and to your hotel's profitability.

As your staff works to deliver customer satisfaction, you can leverage specific tactics to attract new guests while also nurturing relationships with current guests.

### TIPS

- **Streamlined operational efficiency:** The top areas where guests request service is in housekeeping and room service. Implementing a service optimization solution helps hotels improve their guests' experience by streamlining and prioritizing these requests, allowing them to be managed more efficiently. This leads to faster response times and personalized service, ultimately enhancing guest satisfaction and a hotel's reputation.

**|||PRO TIP:** Service optimization solutions can be integrated with guest messaging software for even more streamlined efficiencies. With these tools, guests can request in-room assistance and provide feedback in a matter of seconds, creating a direct line of communication.

- **User generated content:** Nothing shows the value of your hotel like guests enjoying the property. Think of ways to encourage guests to post images and videos to their social media accounts to grab the attention of potential future guests.

**|||PRO TIP:** Add signage throughout the property pointing to the best photo spots and encourage guests to use your branded hashtags when posting.

- **Complimentary add-ons:** Details matter. Have your guests receive a personalized note upon arrival or leave in-room complimentary goodies for them to enjoy after they have checked in. These details will likely entice them to take their phones out and post!

Social media posting is done by about six out of every ten travelers, and mostly by younger generations. Those over 55 are less likely to share their experiences in any form except for personal conversations.

[Phocuswright, U.S. Consumer Travel 2022: Shopping and Booking Report](#)



www.amadeus-hospitality.com

- **Email campaign:** You can set up an email campaign to send recommendations to guests that are relevant to their current stay, depending on your audience. Being proactive by providing information on local attractions, restaurants and bars can make a great impression and further build brand trust.

According to [TripAdvisor](#):

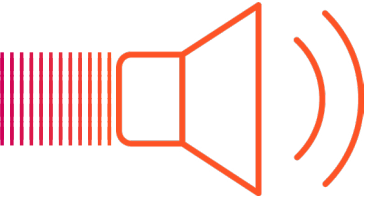
**81%**  
of travelers  
always or  
frequently read  
reviews before  
booking a stay

**79%**  
of users are more  
likely to book a hotel  
with a higher rating  
when picking between  
identical properties

- **QR codes:** Share a QR code at key locations around your property linking to your preferred review site, encouraging guests to leave a comment while they are having a good time.

**|||PRO TIP:** Monitor these reviews and award those who share their experiences while on-site with a discount or free service.





Playlist: Curate a playlist that reflects your hotel's mood and appeal and have it readily available to stream in and out of the hotel room.

- **Loyalty program:** Invite guests to sign up for your program while at check-out and keep the registration process simple so they can complete it before their departure.

## It's time to respond to Gen Z.

- Hoteliers can no longer disregard post-millennials, **as research predicts that they will make up a third of global spending power by 2035.**
- Gen Z is the first generation to grow up with 24/7 internet connectivity, **making them digital natives:**

1. They use social media platforms more than other generations.
2. They are their own travel agents, curating their own travel plans while heavily valuing experiences and authenticity.

||| Is your property adopting tactics to cater to demographic shifts?

[Skift](#), [McKinsey Article](#)





# 5 The Post-Trip Stage

Your guests loved their stay and want to keep sharing their experience with their friends and family!

Once the vacation is over, and your guests leave happy and relaxed, they will want to continue to share their trip highlights, from posting vacation videos on Tik Tok or Instagram to singing your praises on their next Zoom call.

At this stage of the traveler journey, you want to make it as easy as possible for past guests to share their experiences with their friends and family while also establishing a lasting relationship with them. Make it convenient for them to post reviews about your property's top features and remember to express appreciation for their business.

## TIPS

- **Guest surveys:** To assess the good and the bad, ask guests to complete post-stay surveys. The results from these surveys allow you to gain the necessary insights to improve services and offerings.

Download our [Guest Survey Template](#) for common examples.

||| **PRO TIP:** Compare and contrast survey findings with the feedback and insights from your guest messaging software. The results can help you analyze performance and adapt the hotel's operations.



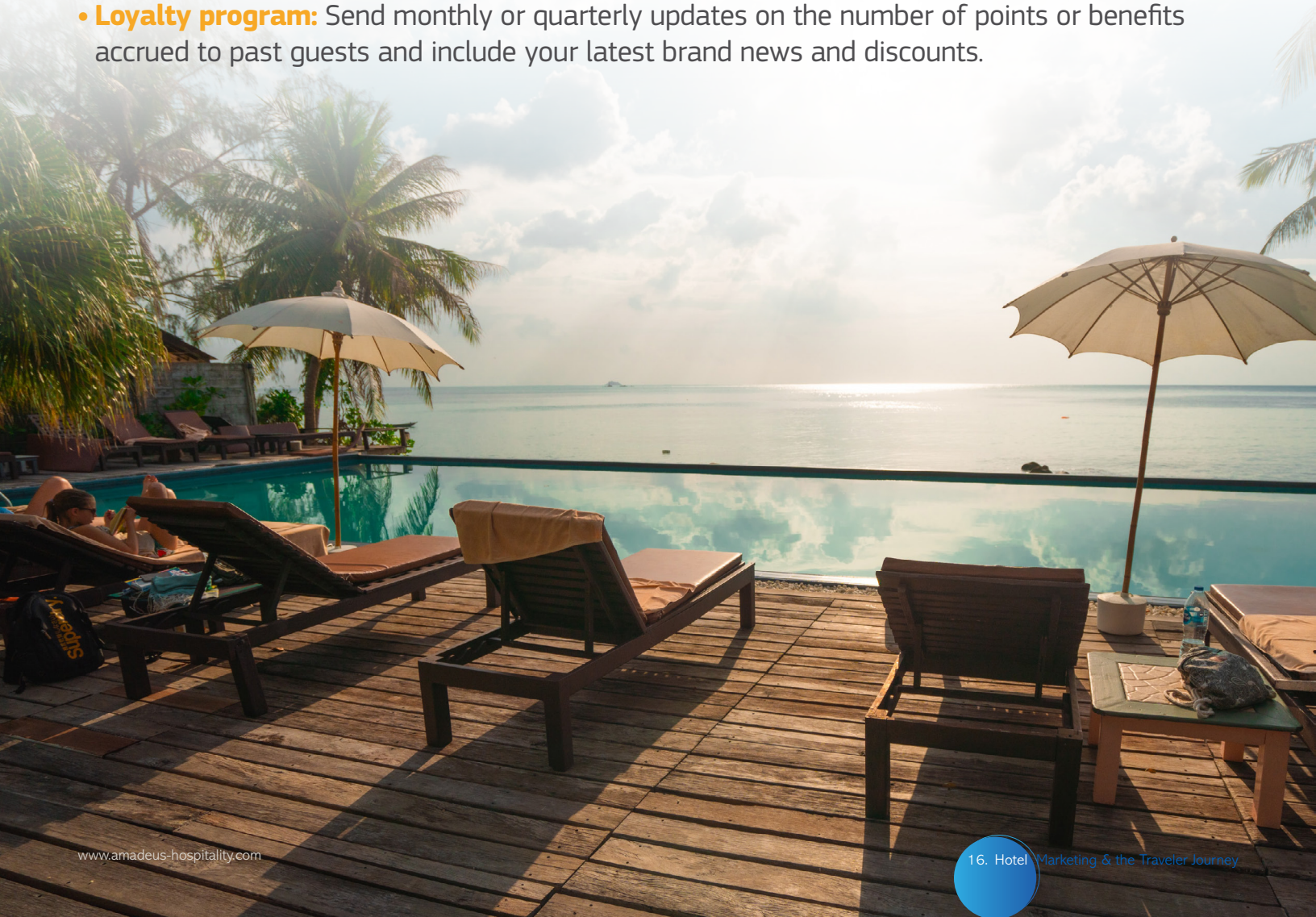


- **Continue to shape your email strategy:**

- **Follow up email:** You can send an automated email campaign to guests once they check out of the hotel. This campaign sequence should direct them to publish a review on your GBP listing, TripAdvisor, Facebook, or your preferred reviews site.
- **Periodic emails:** Your email marketing strategy needs to include reaching out to your audience regularly. This is a great way to re-engage travelers who have not shown interest in your property for a while.

**PRO TIP:** Build an email sequence to contact them 8-9 months after their recent visit to spark thoughts of revisiting the area and your hotel.

- **Connect on social media:** Ask your guests to like and follow your social media profiles so they can get updates on discounts for future visits. This is a great way to keep in touch with guests and re-target them on different channels.
- **Run contests:** Depending on your market, you can launch contests to encourage past guests to post their vacation photos and tag your hotel across social media. Your property will boost their online reach while interacting with and rewarding past guests.
- **Loyalty program:** Send monthly or quarterly updates on the number of points or benefits accrued to past guests and include your latest brand news and discounts.



As we have seen,  
it is important to drive guests to  
your property by developing an overarching  
strategy that spans the entire traveler journey.  
Start out by delivering inspiring content about your  
brand and remaining present on multiple channels; spark  
interest among your target audience; entice potential  
travelers to book; delight your guests with a wonderful and  
hospitable experience; then continue to stay connected  
following their stay. Evaluate your marketing tactics  
throughout the journey.

**With emerging market trends, new digital platforms,  
and generational changes, smart hotel marketers  
will continue to educate themselves and adapt  
their strategies to the future of  
hospitality.**

For further information, visit  
[amadeus-hospitality.com](https://amadeus-hospitality.com)  
or speak to an Amadeus representative today.

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